

How are the participants in the Strategic Advisory Groups selected and appointed?

Strategic Advisory Groups for the General Plan update will be formed around emerging themes identified **at the completion of Planning Phase Two**. Membership will emphasize expertise in the specific themes for which the Groups were formed, and we anticipate one or more Groups may include county-, state-, or national-based experts to brainstorm best practices for meeting the future needs of Howard County.

At this time, we anticipate up to five Groups will be formed and each may meet up to five times during the planning process. General responsibilities for the Groups will include 1) discussing available data and brainstorming big ideas for the specific themes, 2) reviewing a preferred growth scenario and general recommendations in the context of the five themes, and 3) generating ideas and key partnerships for successful implementation in each theme area. Additional responsibilities may be assigned to the Groups based on needs for the project identified during the planning process. The consultant recommends ten to fifteen members per Group to effectively manage time and resources for the project.

We assume members of the Strategic Advisory Groups will be selected through a recruitment process to ensure we have the capacity, knowledge, and experience needed to address the themes for which the Groups were formed. Interest forms/applications will be available on the project website for individuals interested for consideration, and notice of the interest forms/applications will be widely circulated through email, announcements at meetings, direct contact with special interest group leaders, social media, etc. to increase the number of people considered for the appointments. The Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) will finalize a membership list for each Strategic Advisory Group with input from the consultant. The membership list for each Group will consider the following criteria for selection:

- Expertise in the theme area;
- Representation of the County in terms of race/ethnicity, age, tenure in the County, and location in the County;
- Multiple view points for the theme area; and
- Availability to attend up to five meetings.
- Knowledge of Howard County planning practices

County-, state-, or national-based experts added to the Groups will be recommended by the consultant team and approved by DPZ staff. Experts will not count against the size limitations recommended by the consultant.

Who is invited to participate in the Strategic Advisory Groups? Please provide names.

Residents, business owners, land owners, organization representatives, special interest groups, etc. are encouraged to apply for appointment to one of the Strategic Advisory Groups via the interest form/application that will be available on the project website. The final membership list for each Group will consider the criteria summarized in our response to question one above. County-, state-, or national-based experts added to the Groups will be recommended by the consultant team and approved by DPZ staff.

We do not have a list of participants for the Strategic Advisory Groups at this time. County Council is encouraged to recommend names to add to the list of individuals that will be contacted via email, announcements at meetings, direct contact, social media, etc. to increase the number of people considered for the appointments.

Who are the current participants of the Strategic Advisory Groups? Please provide names. There are no current members of the Strategic Advisory Groups- see response to #1 and 2 regarding timing and formation of these groups after Planning Phase II.

Given the focus of “structural racism”, are we evaluating the participants of the Advisory Groups and the process to ensure we eliminate historical structural racism? If so, please provide details.

Structural racism is an issue that is embedded in this Country’s history, culture, institutions and interpersonal relationships; therefore, there are limitations to addressing this issue through a planning process.

Historically, local land use laws and zoning codes have reinforced structural racism through practices such as red-lining and have created financial barriers to enter various commercial and housing markets. While the financial barriers affect anyone with limited economic means, people of color have been disproportionately affected. However, Columbia and its New Town zoning in the 1960’s was a massive step towards integrated communities and equity in Howard County.

Through planning processes, equity is a common theme. HoCo By Design has multiple means through which it can incorporate an equity lens, specifically through its educational curriculum, Ideas Exchange workshops and advisory groups.

Educational Curriculum: A portion of the curriculum can be used to educate residents and stakeholders on how structural racism has played out through land use in the Baltimore-Washington region and how it impacted Howard County.

Ideas Exchange Workshops: As a part of the idea gathering, those engaged in the process could be asked to think about questions such as: How can we strive for equity when it comes to opportunities for better health, economic prosperity, housing, etc.? What role can land use planning play? What are the limits of planning? What opportunities are available in the planning arena?

Advisory Groups: Each advisory group, including the Planning Advisory Committee and the Strategic Advisory Groups, could include an Equity Advisor/Consultant whose purpose would be to ensure that equity is considered and discussed at all stages of the planning process.

To begin to tackle the land use and planning issues that are facing Howard County, it is important to begin the planning process in a timely manner. Once the General Plan is adopted, the County will be able to begin the process of a comprehensive zoning rewrite and begin to address the equity issues that are identified through the planning process.

